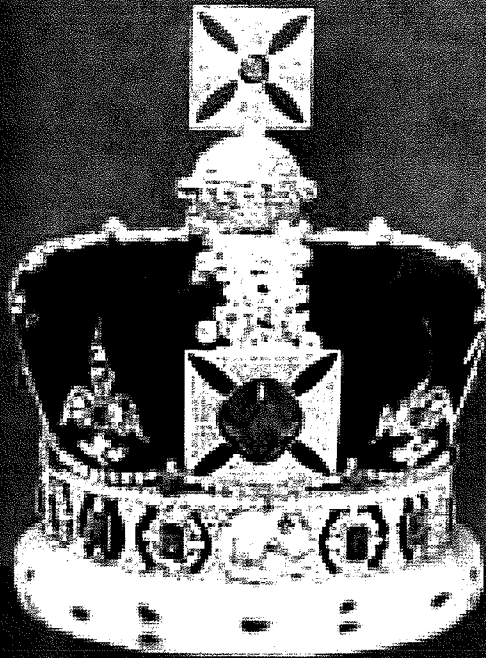


The Prince and the Pauper

by Mark Twain
adapted by Joellen Bland



A prince and a
poor boy trade
places just for fun.
But something
goes terribly
wrong.

Connect to Your Life

Suppose you switched places with a king or a queen for a day. Discuss the kinds of things you would do if you were “in charge” for a full day.

Key to the Drama

This play takes place in England in the 1500s. You will find many old-fashioned words. Read all the side notes. Ask your teacher for help.

Pay close attention to the events in the plot. **Plot** means the events that happen in a story. The plot leads to a **climax**, the most important event in the story. At first, this plot may be confusing. The events switch back and forth between two boys who look alike. You might write down important events to keep track of what is going on.

As the play opens, the young prince and a young pauper trade places. When they put on each other's clothes, people start confusing them with each other. Soon events get out of control. Read the play to find out what happens.

Vocabulary Preview

Words to Know

heir	impostor
affliction	oppress



Reading Coach CD-ROM selection

Five hundred years ago, England was not an easy place to live, especially if you were poor. The pauper in the title of this play was very poor—a **pauper** is a person who has nothing at all. Paupers made their living by begging in the streets. Even children were sent out to the streets to beg. Keep this in mind as you read *The Prince and the Pauper*.

FOCUS

Try to visualize the setting and the stage directions to figure out what is going on at the beginning of the play.

Cast of Characters

Edward, Prince of Wales

Tom Canty, the Pauper

Lord Hertford

Lord St. John

King Henry VIII

Herald

Miles Hendon

John Canty, Tom's father

Hugo, a young thief

Two Women

Justice

Constable (policeman)

Jailer

Sir Hugh Hendon

Two Prisoners

Two Guards

Three Pages

Lords and Ladies

Villagers

All photographs of characters are from the movie version of *The Prince and the Pauper*.

Scene 1

Time: 1547.

Setting: *Westminster Palace, England. Gates leading to courtyard are right. Slightly to left, off courtyard and inside gates, interior of palace anteroom is visible. There is couch with rich robe draped on it, screen at rear, bellcord, mirror, chairs, and table holding bowl of nuts and large golden seal. Piece of armor hangs on one wall. Exits rear and downstage.*

anteroom
(ăn' tē rōōm')
waiting room

10

At Curtain Rise: *Two Guards stand left and right of gates. Several Villagers hover nearby, straining to see into courtyard where Prince is playing. Two Women enter right.*

1st Woman. I have walked all morning just to have a glimpse of Westminster Palace.

2nd Woman. Maybe if we can get near enough to the gates, we can see the young prince. (Tom Canty, *dirty and ragged, comes out of crowd and steps close to gates.*)

Tom. I have always dreamed of seeing a real prince! (*Excited, he presses his nose against the gates.*)

1st Guard. Mind your manners, you young beggar! (*Seizes Tom by collar and sends him sprawling into crowd. Villagers laugh as Tom slowly gets to his feet.*)

Prince (*rushing to gates*). How dare you treat a poor **subject** of the King in such a manner! Open the gates and let him in! (*As Villagers see Prince, they remove hats, and bow low.*)

subject (süb' jřkt) person under the king's control

Villagers (*shouting together*). Long live the Prince of Wales! (*Guards open gates and Tom slowly passes through, as if in a dream.*)

Prince (*to Tom*). You look tired, and you have been treated cruelly. I am Edward, Prince of Wales. What is your name?

Tom (*in awe*). Tom Canty, Your Highness.

THINK IT THROUGH

How did Tom Canty get into the palace?

FOCUS

How does the boy named Tom inspire the Prince to do something risky?

Prince. Come into the palace with me, Tom. (Prince
40 *leads Tom into anteroom.* Villagers
pantomime conversation, and all but
a few exit.) Where do you live, Tom?

pantomime
(pǎn' tē mīm')
pretend to talk,
but make no
sound

Tom. In Offal Court, Your Highness.

Prince. Offal Court? That's an odd
name. Do you have parents?

Tom. Yes, Your Highness.

Prince. How does your father treat you?

Tom. If it please you, Your Highness,
when I am not able to beg for a penny
50 for our supper, he treats me to
beatings.

REREAD

What kind of life
does Tom have?

Prince (*shocked*). What! My father is not a calm man,
but he does not beat me. (*looks at Tom*
thoughtfully) You speak well and have an easy
grace. Have you been schooled?

Tom. Very little, Your Highness. A good priest who
shares our house has taught me from his books.

Prince. Do you have a pleasant life in Offal Court?

Tom. Pleasant enough, Your Highness, save when I am
60 hungry. We have Punch and Judy shows, and
sometimes we lads have fights in the street.

Prince (*eagerly*). I should like that. Tell me more.

Tom. In summer, we run races and swim in the river,
and we love to wallow in the mud.

Prince (*wistfully*). If I could wear your clothes and play in the mud just once, with no one to forbid me, I think I could give up the crown!

Tom (*shaking his head*). And if I could wear your fine clothes just once, Your Highness . . .

70 **Prince**. Would you like that? Come then. We shall change places. You can take off your rags and put on my clothes—and I will put on yours. (*He leads Tom behind screen, and they return shortly, each wearing the other's clothes.*) Let's look in this mirror. (*leads Tom to mirror*)

REREAD

Describe the Prince now.
Describe Tom.

Tom (*in the Prince's clothes*). Oh, Your Highness, it is not proper for me to wear such clothes.

Prince (*in Tom's rags, excitedly*). Heavens,
 80 do you not see it? We look like brothers!
 We have the same features and **bearing**.
 If we went about together, dressed alike,
 there is no one who could say which is the
 Prince of Wales and which is Tom Canty.

bearing
 (bār' ĭng)
 the way a person
 stands, sits, walks,
 or behaves

THINK IT THROUGH

Why are the Prince and Tom envious of each other's lives?

FOCUS

Read on to find out how the Prince gets into trouble.

Tom (*drawing back, rubbing hand*). Your Highness, I
 am frightened. . . .

Prince. Do not worry. (*seeing Tom rub hand*) Is that a
 bruise on your hand?

Tom. Yes, but it is a slight thing, Your Highness.

90 **Prince** (*angrily*). It was shameful and cruel of that
 guard to strike you. Do not stir a step until I come
 back. I command you! (*He picks up*
golden seal and carefully puts it into
piece of armor. He then dashes out to
gates.) Open! Unbar the gates at once!

REREAD

Watch for this
 seal later.

(*2nd Guard opens gates, and as Prince*
runs out, 1st Guard seizes him, boxes him
on the ear, and knocks him to ground.)

boxes
 (bŏk' sĭz)
 hits

100 **1st Guard**. Take that, you little beggar, for
 the trouble you have made for me with the Prince.
 (*Villagers roar with laughter.*)

Prince (*picking himself up, turning on Guard*
furiously). I am Prince of Wales! You shall hang for
 laying your hand on me!

1st Guard (*presenting arms; mockingly*).

I salute Your Gracious Highness!

(*then, angrily shoving Prince aside*) Be off, you mad bag of rags! (Prince is surrounded by Villagers, who hustle him off.)

REREAD

Why does the guard treat the Prince this way?

110

Villagers (*ad lib, as they exit, shouting*). Make way for His Royal Highness! Make way for the Prince of Wales! Hail to the Prince! (*etc.*)

THINK IT THROUGH

What has happened to the Prince?

FOCUS

What is happening at the same time to Tom, the beggar dressed as the Prince?

Tom (*admiring himself in mirror*). If only the boys in Offal Court could see me! They will not believe me when I tell them about this. (*looks around anxiously*) But where is the Prince? (*looks cautiously into courtyard*). Two Guards immediately snap to attention and salute. He quickly ducks back into anteroom as Lords St. John and Hertford enter at rear.)

120

Hertford (*going toward Tom, then stopping and bowing low*). My Lord, you look distressed. What is wrong?

REREAD

Who does Hertford think he's talking to?

Tom (*trembling*). Oh, I beg of you, be merciful. I am no prince, but poor Tom Canty of Offal Court. Please let me see the Prince, and he will give my rags back to me and let me go unhurt.

merciful

(mûr' sŷ fəl)
showing great kindness

130

(*kneeling*) Please, be merciful and spare me!

Hertford (*disturbed*). Your Highness, on your knees?
To me? (*bows quickly, then, aside to St. John*) The
Prince has gone mad! We must inform the King. (*to*
Tom) A moment, Your Highness. (*Hertford and St.*
John exit rear.)

Tom. Oh, there is no hope for me now. They will hang
me for certain! (*Hertford and St. John reenter,*
supporting King. Tom watches in awe as they help
him to couch, where he sinks down wearily.)

140 **King** (*beckoning Tom close to him*). Now, my son,
Edward, my prince. What is this? Do you mean to
deceive me, the King, your father, who loves you
and treats you so kindly?

Tom (*dropping to his knees*). You are the
King? Then I have no hope!

REREAD

Why do you
think Tom is
scared?

King (*stunned*). My child, you are not
well. Do not break your father's old heart. Say you
know me.

Tom. Yes, you are my lord the King, whom God
150 preserve.

King. True, that is right. Now, you will not deny that
you are Prince of Wales, as they say you did just a
while ago?

Tom. Your Grace, believe me, I am the lowest of your
subjects, being born a pauper, and it is by great
mistake that I am here. I am too young to die. Oh,
please, spare me, sire!

King (*amazed*). Die? Do not talk so, my child. You
shall not die.

160 **Tom** (*gratefully*). God save you, my king! And now,
may I go?

King. Go? Where would you go?

Tom. Back to the alley where I was born and bred to misery.

King. My poor child, rest your head here. (*He holds Tom's head and pats his shoulder, then turns to Hertford and St. John.*) Alas, I am old and ill, and my son is mad. But this shall pass. Mad or sane, he is my heir and shall rule England. Tomorrow he shall be installed and confirmed in his princely dignity! Bring the Great Seal!

heir

(âr)

n. one who gets a person's money or title after the person dies

170

Hertford (*bowing low*). Please, Your Majesty, you took the Great Seal from the Chancellor two days ago to give to His Highness the Prince.

King. So I did. (*to Tom*) My child, tell me, where is the Great Seal?

REREAD

Why doesn't Tom know where the seal is?

180

Tom (*trembling*). Indeed, my lord, I do not know.

affliction

(ə flɪk' shən)

n. cause of pain

King. Ah, your affliction hangs heavily upon you. 'Tis no matter. You will remember later. Listen, carefully! (*gently, but firmly*) I command you to hide your affliction in all ways that be within your power. You shall deny to no one that you are the true prince, and if your memory should fail you upon any occasion of state, you shall be advised by your uncle, the Lord Hertford.

190 **Tom** (*resigned*). The King has spoken. The King shall be obeyed.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why does the King think his son is mad?

FOCUS

Will Tom convince anyone that he is not the Prince?

King. And now, my child, I go to rest. (*He stands weakly, and Hertford leads him off, rear.*)

Tom (*wearily, to St. John*). May it please your lordship to let me rest now?

St. John. So it please Your Highness, it is for you to command and us to obey. But it is wise that you rest, for this evening you must attend the Lord Mayor's banquet in your honor. (*He pulls bellcord, and Three Pages enter and kneel before Tom.*)

Tom. Banquet? (*Terrified, he sits on couch and reaches for cup of water, but 1st Page instantly seizes cup, drops to one knee, and serves it to him. Tom starts to take off boots, but 2nd Page stops him and does it for him. He tries to remove cape and gloves, and 3rd Page does it for him.*) I wonder that you do not try to breathe for me also! (*Lies down cautiously.*)

Pages cover him with robe, then back away and exit.)

St. John (*to Hertford, as he enters*). Plainly, what do you think?

plainly
(plān' lē)
honestly

Hertford. Plainly, this. The King is near death, my nephew the Prince of Wales is clearly mad and will mount the throne mad. God protect England, for she will need it!

St. John. Does it not seem strange that madness could so change his manner from what it used to be? It troubles me, his saying he is not the Prince.

Hertford. Peace, my lord! If he were an impostor and called himself the Prince, that would be natural. But was there ever an impostor, who being called Prince by the King and court, denied it? Never!

impostor
(ĩm pŏs' tər)
n. person who pretends to be someone else

This is the true Prince gone mad. And tonight all London shall honor him. (*Hertford and St. John exit. Tom sits up, looks around helplessly, then gets up.*)

- 230 **Tom.** I should have thought to order something to eat. (*sees bowl of nuts on table*) Ah! Here are some nuts! (*Looks around, sees Great Seal in armor, takes it out, looks at it curiously.*) This will make a good nutcracker. (*He takes bowl of nuts, sits on couch and begins to crack nuts with Great Seal and eat them, as curtain falls.*)

* * * * *

THINK IT THROUGH

Why do people believe that Tom is the Prince, even though he keeps saying that he is not?

FOCUS

Now read on to discover what's happening to the real Prince out on the streets.

Scene 2

Time: *Later that night.*

Setting: *A street in London, near Offal Court. Played before curtain.*

- 240 **At Curtain Rise:** Prince limps in, dirty and tousled. He looks around wearily. Several Villagers pass by, pushing against him.

tousled
(tou' zeld)
made untidy

Prince (*dressed in rags*). I have never seen this poor section of London. I must be near Offal Court. If only I can find it before I drop! (John Canty *steps out of crowd, seizes Prince roughly.*)

warrant
(wôr' ənt)
declare

Canty. Out at this time of night, and I
250 **warrant** you haven't brought a **farthing**
home! If that is the case and I do not
break all the bones in your miserable
body, then I am not John Canty.

farthing
(fär' thĭng)
old British coin

Prince (*eagerly*). Oh, are you his father?

Canty. His father? I am *your* father, and—

REREAD
Who is John
Canty and who
does he think
the Prince is?

Prince. Take me to the palace at once,
and your son will be returned to you.
The King, my father, will make you rich beyond
your wildest dreams. Oh, save me, for I am indeed
260 the Prince of Wales.

Canty (*staring in amazement*). Gone stark mad! But
mad or not, I'll soon find where the soft places lie
in your bones. Come home! (*starts to drag Prince
off*)

Prince (*struggling*). Let me go! I am the Prince of
Wales, and the King shall have your life for this!

Canty (*angrily*). I'll take no more of your madness!
(*Raises stick to strike, but Prince struggles free and
runs off. Canty runs after him.*)

* * * * *

THINK IT THROUGH

Why does Tom's father think the Prince is mad?

FOCUS

Now read to find out what's happening back at the Palace.
Will Tom really be crowned King?

Scene 3

270 **Setting:** *Same as Scene 1 (inside Palace), with addition of dining table, set with dishes and goblets, on raised platform. Throne-like chair is at head of table.*

At Curtain Rise: *A banquet is in progress. Tom, in royal robes, sits at head of table, with Hertford at his right and St. John at his left. Lords and Ladies sit around table, eating and talking softly.*

Tom (*dressed as Prince; to Hertford*). What is this, my Lord? (*holds up plate*)

280 **Hertford.** Lettuce and turnips, Your Highness.

Tom. Lettuce and turnips? I have never seen them before. Am I to eat them?

Hertford (*discreetly*). Yes, Your Highness, if you so desire. (*Tom begins to eat food with his fingers. Fanfare of trumpets is heard, and Herald enters, carrying scroll. All turn to look.*)

discreetly
(dĭ skrēt' lē)
in a wisely
cautious way

290 **Herald** (*reading from scroll*). His Majesty, King Henry VIII, is dead! The King is dead! (*All rise and turn to Tom, who sits, stunned.*)

All (*together*). The King is dead. Long live the King! Long live Edward, the King of England! (*All bow to Tom. Herald bows and exits.*)

Hertford (*to Tom*). Your Majesty, we must call the **council**. Come, St. John. (*Hertford and St. John lead Tom off at*

REREAD

Why are they
calling Tom the
King?

rear. Lords and Ladies follow, talking among themselves. At gates, down right, Villagers enter and mill about. Prince enters right, pounds on gates and shouts.)

Prince (*still in rags*). Open the gates! I am the Prince of Wales! Open, I say! And though I am friendless with no one to help me, I will not be driven from my ground.

Miles Hendon (*entering through crowd*). Though you be Prince or not, you are indeed a gallant lad and not friendless. Here I stand to prove it, and you might have a worse friend than Miles Hendon.

gallant (gál' ent) brave

1st Villager. 'Tis another prince in disguise. Take the lad and dunk him in the pond! (*He seizes Prince, but Miles strikes him with flat of his sword. Crowd, now angry, presses forward threateningly, when fanfare of trumpets is heard offstage. Herald, carrying scroll, enters up left at gates.*)

Herald. Make way for the King's messenger! (*reading from scroll*) His Majesty, King Henry VIII is dead! The King is dead! (*He exits right, repeating message, and Villagers stand in stunned silence.*)

Prince (*stunned*). The King is dead!

1st Villager (*shouting*). Long live Edward, King of England!

Villagers (*together*). Long live the King! (*shouting, ad lib*) Long live King Edward! Heaven protect Edward, King of England!

Miles (*taking Prince by arm*). Come, lad, before the crowd remembers us. I have a room at the inn, and

330	you can stay there. <i>(He hurries off with stunned Prince. Tom, led by Hertford, enters courtyard up rear. Villagers see them.)</i>	REREAD Why might you call this a "near miss"?
-----	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------

Villagers *(together)*. Long live the King!
(They fall to their knees as curtains close.)

* * * * *

THINK IT THROUGH

How has the King's death affected both Tom and the Prince?

FOCUS

Read Scene 4 to learn what happens when Miles falls asleep.

Scene 4

Setting: Miles's *room at inn*. At right is table set with dishes and bowls of food, a chair at each side. At left is bed, with table and chair next to it, and a window. Candle is on table.

At Curtain Rise: Miles and Prince approach table.

340 **Miles.** I have had a hot supper prepared. I'll bet you're hungry, lad.

Prince *(dressed in rags)*. Yes, I am. It's kind of you to let me stay with you, Miles. I am truly Edward, King of England, and you shall not go unrewarded. *(sits at table)*

Miles *(to himself)*. First he called himself Prince, and now King. Well, I will humor him. *(starts to sit)*

Prince *(angrily)*. Stop! Would you sit in the presence of the King?

350 **Miles** *(surprised, standing up quickly)*. I beg your pardon, Your Majesty. I was not thinking. *(Stares*

*uncertainly at Prince, who sits at table, expectantly.
Miles starts to uncover dishes of food, serves Prince
and fills glasses.)*

Prince. Miles, you have a gallant way about you. Are you nobly born?

Miles. My father is a **baronet**, Your Majesty.

baronet
(băr' ə nĭt)
British nobleman

Prince. Then you also must be a baronet.

360 **Miles** (*shaking his head*). My father **banished** me from home seven years ago, so I fought in the wars. I was taken prisoner, and I have spent the past seven years in prison. Now I am free, and I am returning home.

banished
(băn' ĭsht)
forced to leave

Prince. You must have been shamefully wronged! But I will make things right for you. You have saved me

from injury and possible death. Name your reward
and if it be within the compass of my royal power,
370 it is yours.

Miles (*pausing briefly, then dropping to his knee*). Since Your Majesty is pleased to hold my simple duty worthy of reward, I ask that I and my successors may hold the privilege of sitting in the presence of the King.

REREAD

Why is Miles acting like this?

Prince (*taking Miles's sword, tapping him lightly on each shoulder*). Rise and seat yourself. (*returns sword to Miles, then rises and goes over to bed*)

380 **Miles** (*rising*). He should have been born a king. He plays the part to a marvel! If I had not thought of this favor, I might have had to stand for weeks. (*sits down and begins to eat*)

Prince. Sir Miles, you will stand guard while I sleep. (*lies down and instantly falls asleep*)

rueful
(rōō' fəl)
unhappy

Miles. Yes, Your Majesty. (*With a rueful look at his uneaten supper, he stands up.*)

390 Poor little chap. I suppose his mind has been disordered with ill usages. (*covers Prince with his cape*) Well, I will be his friend and watch over him. (*Blows out candle, then yawns and sits on chair next to bed, and falls asleep. John Canty and Hugo appear at window, peer around room, then enter cautiously through window. They lift the sleeping Prince, staring nervously at Miles.*)

REREAD

Does Miles believe the Prince? How do you know?

400 **Canty** (*in a loud whisper*). I swore the day he was born he would be a thief and a beggar, and I won't lose him now. Lead the way to the camp, Hugo! (*Canty and Hugo carry Prince off right, as Miles sleeps on and curtain falls.*)

* * * * *

THINK IT THROUGH

Why do John Canty and Hugo carry off the Prince?

FOCUS

What will the Prince's life be like with John Canty?

Scene 5

Time: *Two weeks later.*

Setting: *Country village street. May be played before curtain.*

Before Curtain Rise: *Villagers walk about. Canty, Hugo, and Prince enter.*

Canty. I will go in this direction. Hugo, keep my mad son with you, and see that he does not escape again! (*exits*)

410 **Hugo** (*seizing Prince by the arm*). He won't escape! I'll see that he earns his bread today, or else!

Prince (*dressed in rags; pulling away*). I will not beg with you, and I will not steal! I have suffered enough in this miserable company of thieves!

Hugo. You shall suffer more if you do not do as I tell you! (*raises clenched fist at Prince*) Refuse if you dare! (*Woman enters, carrying wrapped bundle in a basket on her arm.*) Wait here until I come back.

420 (*Hugo sneaks along after Woman, then snatches her bundle, runs back to Prince, and thrusts it into his arms.*) Run after me and call, "Stop, thief!" Be sure you lead her astray! (*Runs off. Prince throws down bundle in disgust.*)

REREAD

What does Hugo do to try to trick the woman?

Woman. Help! Thief! Stop, thief! (*rushes at Prince and seizes him, just as several Villagers enter*) You little thief! What do you mean by robbing a poor woman? Somebody bring the constable! (*Miles enters and watches.*)

430 **1st Villager** (*grabbing Prince*). I'll teach him a lesson, the little villain!

Prince (*struggling*). Unhand me! I did not rob this woman!

Miles (*stepping forth and pushing man back with the flat of his sword*). Let us proceed gently, my friends. This is a matter for the law.

Prince (*springing to Miles's side*). You have come just in time, Sir Miles. Carve this rabble to rags!

Miles. Speak softly. Trust in me and all shall go well.
440 (Constable *enters*)

Constable (*reaching for Prince*). Come along, young rascal!

Miles. Gently, good friend. He shall go peaceably to the Justice.

Prince. I will not go before a Justice! I did not do this thing!

Miles (*taking him aside*). Sire, will you reject the laws of the **realm**, yet demand that your subjects respect them?

realm
(rĕlm)
kingdom

450 **Prince** (*after a pause; calmly*). You are right, Sir Miles. Whatever the King requires a subject to suffer under the law, he will suffer himself while he holds the station of a subject.

REREAD

How do Miles and the Prince feel about obeying the law?

(Constable *leads them off right*.
Villagers *follow*.)

* * * * *

Setting: Office of the Justice. A high bench is at center.

460 **At Curtain Rise:** Justice *sits behind bench*. Constable *enters with Miles and Prince, followed by Villagers*. Woman *carries wrapped bundle*.

Constable (*to Justice*). A young thief, your worship, is accused of stealing a dressed pig from this poor woman.

Justice (*looking down at Prince, then Woman*). My good woman, are you absolutely certain this lad stole your pig?

Woman. It was none other than he, your worship.

470 **Justice.** Are there no witnesses to the contrary? (*All shake their heads.*) Then the lad stands convicted. (*to Woman*) What do you hold this property to be worth?

REREAD
What does this tell about how the law treats common people?

Woman. Three shillings and eight pence, your worship.

shillings,
pence
British coins

Justice (*leaning down to Woman*). Good woman, do you know that when one steals a thing above the value of thirteen pence, the law says he shall hang for it?

480 **Woman** (*upset*). Oh, what have I done? I would not hang the poor boy for the whole world! Save me from this, your worship. What can I do?

Justice (*gravely*). You may revise the value, since it is not yet written in the record.

Woman. Then call the pig eight pence, your worship.

Justice. So be it. You may take your property and go. (*Woman starts off, and is followed by Constable. Miles follows them cautiously down right.*)

490 **Constable** (*stopping Woman*). Good woman, I will buy your pig from you. (*Takes coins from his pocket.*) Here is eight pence.

Woman. Eight pence! It cost me three shillings and eight pence.

Constable. Indeed! Then come back before his worship and answer for this. The lad must hang!

Woman. No! No! Say no more. Give me the eight pence and hold your peace.

REREAD
Why does the woman let the constable pay so little for the pig?

500 (Constable *hands her coins and takes pig*. Woman *exits, angrily*. Miles *returns to bench*.)

Justice. The boy is sentenced to a **fortnight** in the common jail. Take him away, Constable! (Justice *exits*. Prince *gives Miles a nervous glance*.)

fortnight
(fört' nīt')
two weeks

Miles (*following Constable*). Good sir, turn your back a moment and let the poor lad escape. He is innocent.

Constable (*outraged*). What? You say this to me? Sir, I
510 arrest you in—

Miles. Do not be so hasty! (*slyly*) The pig you have purchased for eight pence may cost you your neck, man.

Constable (*laughing nervously*). Ah, but I was merely **jesting** with the woman, sir.

jesting
(jēs' tīng)
joking

Miles. Would the Justice think it a jest?

Constable. Good sir! The Justice has no more sympathy with a jest than a dead corpse! (*perplexed*) Very well, I will turn my back and see
520 nothing! But go quickly! (*exits*)

Miles (*to Prince*). Come, my **liege**. We are free to go. And that band of thieves shall not set hands on you again. I swear it!

liege
(lēj)
lord or king

530 **Prince** (*wearily*). Can you believe, Sir Miles, that in the last fortnight, I, the King of England, have escaped from thieves and begged for food on the road? I have slept in a barn with a calf! I have washed dishes in a peasant's kitchen, and narrowly escaped death. And not once in all my

REREAD

Compare the Prince's experience with Tom's.

wanderings did I see a courier searching for me! Is it not matter for commotion and distress that the head of state is gone?

Miles (*sadly, aside*). Still busy with his pathetic dream.

(*to Prince*) It is strange indeed, my liege. But come,

I will take you to my father's home in Kent. There you may rest in a house with seventy rooms! I am all impatient to be home again!

REREAD

How will the setting change?

540

(*They exit, Miles cheerful, Prince puzzled, as curtains close.*)

* * * * *

THINK IT THROUGH

How do you think the Prince's experiences with the law have affected him?

FOCUS

Discover a sudden change in setting in the next scene.

Scene 6

Setting: *Village jail. Bare stage, with barred window on one wall.*

At Curtain Rise: *Two Prisoners, in chains, are onstage.*

Jailer shoves Miles and Prince, in chains, onstage.

They struggle and protest.

Miles. But I tell you, I *am* Miles Hendon!

My brother, Sir Hugh, has stolen my bride and my estate!

assaulting
(ə sôl' tîng)
attacking

550

Jailer. Be silent! Sir Hugh will see that you pay well for claiming to be his dead brother and for **assaulting** him in his own house!
(*exits*)

REREAD

What has happened to Miles?

Miles (*sitting with head in hands*). Oh, my dear Edith . . .
now wife to my brother Hugh, against her will, and
my poor father . . . dead!

1st Prisoner. At least you have your life, sir. I am to be
hanged for killing a deer in the King's park.

560 **2nd Prisoner.** And I must hang for stealing a yard of
cloth to dress my children.

Prince (*moved; to Prisoners*). When I mount the
throne, you shall be free. And the laws that have
dishonored you shall be swept from the books.
(*turning away*) Kings should go to school to learn
their own laws and be merciful.

1st Prisoner. What does the lad mean? I have heard
that the King is mad, but merciful.

2nd Prisoner. He is to be crowned at Westminster
570 tomorrow.

Prince (*violently*). King? What King, good sir?

1st Prisoner. Why, we have only one, his most sacred
majesty, King Edward the Sixth.

2nd Prisoner. Whether he be mad or not, his praises
are on all men's lips. He has saved many
innocent lives, and plans to destroy the
cruellest laws that oppress people.

oppress
(ə prēs')
v. rule harshly

Prince (*turning away, shaking his head*).
How can this be? Surely it is not that
580 little beggar boy! (Sir Hugh *enters with*
Jailer.)

REREAD
What has the
Prince just
realized?

Sir Hugh. Seize the impostor! (Jailer *pulls*
Miles *to his feet*.)

Miles. Hugh, this has gone far enough!

Sir Hugh. You will sit in the public **stocks**,
and the boy would join you if he were
not so young. See to it, jailer, and after
two hours, you may release them.
Meanwhile, I ride to London for the
590 **coronation**! (Sir Hugh *exits and Miles is*
hustled out by Jailer.)

stocks
(stōks)
wooden frame
with holes for
feet and hands,
used to punish

coronation
(kōr'ə nā' shən)
ceremony for
crowning a king

Prince. Coronation! There can be no
coronation without me! (*curtain*)

* * * * *

THINK IT THROUGH

What has the Prince learned while in jail?

FOCUS

Learn whether the Prince makes it to
the coronation.

Scene 7

Time: *Coronation Day.*

Setting: *Outside gates of Westminster Abbey, played
before curtain. Painted screen or flat at rear
represents Abbey. Throne is center. Bench is near it.*

At Curtain Rise: *Lords and Ladies crowd Abbey.*

600 *Outside gates, Guards drive back cheering
Villagers, among them Miles.*

Miles (*distraught*). I've lost him! Poor little chap! He
has been swallowed up in the crowd! (*Fanfare of
trumpets is heard, then Hertford, St. John, Lords
and Ladies enter slowly, followed by Pages, one of
whom carries crown on small cushion. Tom follows*)

procession, looking about nervously. Suddenly, Prince, in rags, steps from crowd, his hand raised.)

Prince. I forbid you to set the crown of England upon that head. I am the King!

610 **Hertford.** Seize the vagabond!

Tom. I forbid it! He is the King! (*kneeling before Prince*) Oh, my lord the King, let poor Tom Canty be the first to say, "Put on your crown and enter into your own right again." (*Hertford and several Lords look closely at both boys.*)

REREAD

Read this passage aloud. Take turns acting out the parts.

Hertford. This is strange indeed. (*to Tom*) By your favor, sir, I wish to ask certain questions of this lad.

620 **Prince.** I will answer truly whatever you may ask, my lord.

Hertford. But if you have been well trained, you may answer my questions as well as our lord the King. I need definite proof. (*thinks a moment*)

Ah! Where lies the Great Seal of England? It has been missing for weeks, and only the true Prince of Wales can say where it lies.

REREAD

Where did the Prince carefully put the seal at the beginning of the play?

630 **Tom.** Wait! Was the seal round and thick, with letters engraved on it? (*Hertford nods.*) I know where it is, but it was not I who put it there. The rightful King shall tell you. (*to Prince*) Think, my King, it was the very last thing you did that day before you rushed out of the palace wearing my rags.

Prince (*pausing*). I recall how we exchanged clothes, but have no recollection of hiding the Great Seal.

Tom (*eagerly*). Remember when you saw the bruise on my hand you ran to the door, but first you hid this thing you call the Seal.

640 **Prince** (*suddenly*). Ah! I remember! (*to St. John*) My good St. John, you shall find the Great Seal in the armor that hangs on the wall in my **chamber**. (*St. John hesitates, but at a nod from Tom hurries off.*)

chamber
(chām' bər)
room

Tom (*pleased*). Right, my King! Now the **scepter** of England is yours again. (*St. John returns in a moment with Great Seal, holds it up for all to see.*)

scepter
(sĕp' tər)
special stick that
is a symbol of
power

All (*shouting*). Long live Edward, King of
650 England! (*Tom takes off cape and throws it over Prince's rags. Trumpet fanfare is heard. St. John takes crown and places it on Prince. All kneel.*)

Hertford. Let the small impostor be flung into the Tower!

Prince (*firmly*). I will not have it so. But for him, I would not have my crown. (*to Tom*) My poor boy, how was it you could remember where I hid the Seal?

660 **Tom** (*embarrassed*). I did not know what it was, my King, and I used it to . . . crack nuts. (*All laugh. Miles steps forward, staring in amazement.*)

Miles. Is he really the King, the **sovereign** of England, and not the poor and friendless Tom o' Bedlam I thought he was? (*sinks down on bench*) I wish I had a bag to hide my head in!

sovereign
(söv' er 'ĭn)
ruler

1st Guard (*rushing up to him*). Stand up, you mannerless clown! How dare you sit in the presence
670 of the King!

Prince. Do not touch him! He is my trusty servant, Miles Hendon, who saved me from shame and possible death. For his service, he owns the right to sit in my presence.

Miles (*bowing, then kneeling*). Your Majesty!

Prince. Rise, Sir Miles. I command that Sir Hugh Hendon, who sits within this hall, be seized and put under lock and key until I have need of him.
(*beckons to Tom*) From what I have heard, Tom
680 Canty, you have governed the realm with royal gentleness and mercy in my absence. Henceforth, you shall hold the honorable title of King's Ward! (Tom *kneels and kisses Prince's hand.*) And because I have suffered with the poorest of my subjects and felt the cruel force of unjust laws, I pledge myself to a reign of mercy for all! (*All bow low, then rise.*)

All (*shouting*). Long live the King! Long live Edward, King of England!

THINK IT THROUGH

1. Why did the confusion between the Prince and Tom continue throughout the play?
2. How was Miles rewarded for his friendship and loyalty? How was Tom rewarded for his actions?
3. Why did the Prince promise to rule with mercy for all?